

## A Right to Feel Safe: Amplifying the Voices of Women, Girls and LGBTQ+ Communities in Public Space Transcript

0:10 Moira Lascelles

Hello everyone, and welcome to UP Projects' first *Constellations ° Assembly* event, *A Right to Feel Safe: Amplifying the Voices of Women, Girls and LGBTQI+ Communities in Public Space*. Thank you so much for being with us today on this absolutely lovely afternoon. My name is Moira Lascelles, and I'm Executive Director and Head of Partnerships at UP Projects. If you require a visual description, I'm a fair skinned woman in her early 40s with long reddish-brown hair. For those of you who may not know UP Projects, we're a leading public art commissioning organisation specialising in social practice, meaning all of our work involves engaging communities through the process of creating public art projects. UP Projects, *Constellations ° Assembly* programme of online events is designed to share learning and knowledge relating to pressing issues facing the public art sector today, and in this, our latest series, titled *Pushing for Spatial Justice*, we will explore the role that art and artists can play in advocating for more inclusive cities. Through three events focusing on varying rights to public space, we will be highlighting the importance of community voices in determining whose rights and what rights are centred. And for today's event, we're focusing on the spatial injustices experienced by women, girls and LGBTQI+ communities, and discussing how public art and community led activism can engage, amplify and reflect diverse voices within the public realm. We're absolutely thrilled to be joined today by two amazing artists, Sahra Hersi and Julian Prairie to explore how methods of co creation and engagement can enable a better understanding of the needs and lift experiences of women girls and LGBTQI+ communities. We're also joined by Eliel Jones, who will be our moderator today. Eliel is Curator (Performance and Time-based Media) at Kanal - Centre Pompidou, which will officially open in 2026. You can find further information on each of our speakers work and their bios in the link which will be put in the chat. Thanks for that Jack. Before I hand over to Eliel, I'd like to quickly mention some virtual housekeeping. If you're experiencing any technical issues today, please use the chat button at the bottom of your screen to chat privately with our dedicated tech support. And if you'd like to ask the speakers any questions, and we would love for you to ask questions, you can do this by putting them in the chat, there will also be an opportunity for you to ask questions verbally at the end of the discussion. So if at that point you'd like to ask a question,

please use the raise hand function, and Eliel will invite you to unmute your microphone. Until then, we do ask that you keep your microphones off, but please feel free to keep your cameras on, because it's lovely to see you guys in the room. To see our speakers consistently, we recommend that you either select the speaker view or select gallery view and click follow hosts video order. Closed captions are available by selecting the CC button at the bottom of your screen. And we also have two BSL interpreters with us today, Lydia Jones and Kirstie Archer. So if you require BSL, please also pin them to your screen, as you heard at the beginning. We are recording today's discussion. I really hope you enjoy it. Without further ado, I'm delighted to hand over to Eliel to begin the conversation. So over to you.

#### 4:12 Eliel Jones

Thank you so much. Moira. Hi everyone. Thank you so much for being here and thank you UP Projects for organising this event and inviting Sahra, Julian and I to participate. My name is Eliel Jones. I'm a white cisgender male with short hair glasses, and I have a gold earring hanging from my left ear. And as Moira introduced, I'm the Curator (Performance and Time-based Media) at Kanal - Centre Pompidou in Brussels, which is a new Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art in the making, not open yet, due to open in the Belgian capital at the end of next year. But prior to moving to Brussels, I lived in London for over a decade, where I worked as a curator, as a writer and as an organiser. And much of my practice to date, has been influenced by a desire to think about ways of building community solidarity, as well as intersectionality of struggles in and out of what we colloquially call the art world. Today's event is titled *A Right to Feel Safe: Amplifying the Voices of Women, Girls and LGBTQI+ Communities in Public Space*. And before I introduce and give way to our two invited speakers who will be sharing about their practices, I wanted to give a little bit of insight as well as context for some of the things that we may be talking about following the presentations. So I would very specifically, would like to point out and point our attention to two key words that are framing this event today, and those are the words "safe", or the experience and feeling of safety, as well as "public space". In an increasingly more privatised public realm, certainly in the UK, but also in the US and across the western world, where the interests of corporations and the rich are given priority over those of communities and public entities. What do we consider to be public space today? How do we define it? Where is it? What do we consider to be the qualities and affects of a place that is experienced as being truly public? And what happens when publicness disappears or when it's weaponised within a particular ideological system, be it capitalism, neoliberalism or neofascism? For over a decade, the right to simply be in public space has slowly been eroded in the UK in unprecedented ways, from Theresa May's

hostile environment policy, which has made the UK a literal hostile place for many newcomers as well as migrant communities, to the increase in police powers that have curtailed the right to protest and demonise civil occupations and disobedience in public space. To a recent ruling by the Supreme Court that has quote, unquote, clarified the legal definition of a woman by their biological sex, fuelling both transphobia and misogyny across public spheres. Public space is made but as we are painfully seeing and experiencing, it is also equally destroyed. These policies and societal transformations are contributing to a public realm that is ever more fractured, and as such at times, impossible to be a part of. And that brings me to the second word that I wanted to further unpack, which is the word safe, or the feeling that you experience an experience of safety. The truth is, none of these policies and changes actually make us safe, no matter who they declare to protect. How is the notion of safety therefore also used as a kind of weapon? What is the value of my safety or your safety, if it comes at the expense of others? How do notions of cohesion and peace and enforce a certain kind of violence, a double bind between what they pretend to achieve and the harm they actually cause to more often than not, marginalised groups and communities. When we talk about safety and the public realm, we must therefore really talk very specifically about whose safety and today the framing of the event very specifically orientates our attention towards the right of women, girls and LGBTQ+ communities to feel safe. And I would like to invite us to enter this conversation today and the presentations coming up from Sahra and Julian with the complexity of these notions of safety and public space, as well as these somewhat open-ended questions, which, of course, go beyond the few initial prompts that I just outlined. As I think we all feel and also know in different ways we are living through very challenging times, and this is inevitably the backdrop for any discussion that thinks through rights, safety, public space and many of the things that we'll be talking about. I am very happy to be moderating and be joined by two really inspiring practitioners working in various ways in the public realm, and who will be sharing with us about their work and some of their projects. Sahra Hersi and Julian Prairie will each give a short presentation of seven minutes each, and this will be followed by a discussion where we will talk about their methodologies and strategies for negotiation, collaboration and preservation of works in the public realm. The hope, as Moira said, is that you will also all join us in this discussion. So if you like, please do write any thoughts or questions that you have throughout their presentations in the chat, I will keep an eye on it and introduce any of these during our more conversational part of this session. You can also voice your question out loud if you would like, please just let me know via the chat or raise your hand, and I will give you a cue for when to come in. And if you do, please turn on your camera, if possible, and if you'd like. So I'm just going to give way to the first speaker, Sahra Hersi. Sahra is an artist, spatial

designer and educator whose work prioritises people, places, art and architecture. Her practice spans publications, workshops, public realm, interventions and buildings, often emerging from collaborations with local communities. She works with local authorities, cultural institutions and third sector organisations across the UK and beyond. And she's also a lecturer in the BA in design at Goldsmiths University. Today, Sahra will be sharing a little bit about a project that she's currently working on with UP Projects, the *Marshgate Lane Wayfinding Commission*, as well as other projects that she's been developing in the public realm. So without further ado, over to you, Sahra. I will just give you a cue at six minutes as a little reminder for the seven-minute presentation. Thank you so much.

## 11:07 Sahra Hersi

Thank you so much. I'm Sahra Hersi. I'm a black woman wearing a headscarf in her 30s. So I'm just going to share the presentation. I...okay, so um, as this well, so my practice is generally interested in people and places. Well, I describe it as caring about people places, art and architecture in that order, and I'll be talking about two projects today, just trying to see if my changing pages works. So the first project I'll be talking about is called *Tender Women*, and this was with the Women's Museum in Barking. I chose this project because it specifically focused on women's experiences. And I worked with a charity called ADANA, and they mainly work with women who've may have experienced domestic violence or facing other challenges. And the idea around this project was to think about this idea of desire lines. And through a series of five workshops, we developed kind of an exhibition, or an idea for an exhibition and a responsive artwork from me. This is not, I guess, technically, in the public realm in terms of being outdoors, but it is in the public realm as like a kind of a museum space, a public space that is accessible for people to walk into basically. So through the workshops, it was kind of like this idea, if I go back to the idea of design lines, is, if you don't know what design lines mean, is usually in the public realm or in a park, you know, there's a line that's been kind of a path that's been created through, like, excessive use outside of the park that the path that's been like designed, for example, like not a paved park, but over time, the grass may wear away, and it creates this desire line. Usually they're quite straightforward and not like meandering, and something that the architect or public planner or designer hadn't intended for the people have used because of convenience or other reasons, and because lots of people have used it, it's become visible in the public realm. And this wasn't us trying to create desire lines in a physical sense, but to think about desire lines as, like, what could desire lines mean if we were to create our own desire lines in the world, like, how do women imagine themselves, like getting to their goals or their dreams or their hopes or other things, and how do, how do we

create those design lines? And through a series of workshops, we explored different making techniques. So we made we did some cross stitching. We did a workshop around indigo dyeing, cyanotype. And what was interesting about indigo and cyanotype is that they transform by being exposed to another element, not such as light or oxygen. So I thought there was, like a transformative element in this. And also it was an experience to learn new skills together, and like think together. And one of the other workshops was also to use existing things like poem by, you know, poem by Maya Angelou, and other writings and other poems by female poets, and to kind of create a collage group poem together. So this is a poem that they created. And through this process, the name "Tender Women" came up, and that became the name of the exhibition. So the workshop was kind of a vehicle of developing the idea for the exhibition. I'm going to move on very quickly, and then so in the background over here, where my mouse is, is some of the indigo dye tea towels that they created and manifestos for themselves. Quite like, catchy, simple manifestos, you know, like, "do you, be you, love you". That's one I always remember. And then, like, I created this sort of structure thinking about this idea of support structures, because this workshop became like a space for being together. And like, through this process, I was like, we've created a kind of safe space. And a lot of women expressed like how this felt like a form of therapy, in a way, to a respite space. I'll move on quite quickly, because I've already gone halfway through time. So yeah, this is just some shots of the exhibition, and this, this was the project that I've been developing with LLDC and UP Projects, and I've been working with a group of women who have been actually employed and paid by LLDC to take part in a series of 10 workshops and to collectively think about this idea of women and girls safety in the public realm. And through these workshops, I've tried to develop an artwork that is, you know, that kind of works as a wayfinding; draws attention to this larger societal issue of, like, women and girls safety. And through this process, you know, like, I'm always with my workshops, especially when there is an outcome that will be developed in the public realm, to really think about, like, what is, how do we manage expectations? What can be realistic, can we realistically do? What is the role of art or design in this, and actually what cannot do? And this is kind of like a piece of writing that I was like thinking about, like, art won't solve the issue of women and girls safety in the public realm, but it has the power to spark critical dialogue, challenge perspectives, create spaces for belonging, beauty and joy. So like, how do we focus on what you actually can do? And then, like, creating a creating a space that's welcoming, a place where you know that kind of can think about notions of safety. And also, safety is on a spectrum. How you feel space depends on so many other societal factors, of your background, your life experiences, what time of day is. It's quite complicated. But then through these workshops, the workshop one was very much like getting to know people, and then site investigation, exploring

materiality and like meaning. So kind of getting the participants to go through the design process with me, to really influence the thinking. And also, it was also about, how do you bring so many people's perspective into one artwork, you know that which is, how do we create these narratives and create a story through the landscape that people can discover and move through. How do you also make sure that people's voices are heard? How do you, especially when there's more than one voice, also, there's other complexities with sites, so there's lots going on, basically. And then very and I think I'm going to wrap up how I work very quickly. So I'm going through this very quickly. So I'm constantly thinking about, what is the give and take, observation as engagement. I won't say this in more depth than what's written on the screen and small changes, because, you know, what can you actually do in in terms of dealing with a massive societal issue? What changes can you make? And then, like, working in context, you know, really understanding that creating narratives, flexibility and adaptability, also recognising it can be messy, it's not a linear process. And then, how do you create meaningful work? How do you make it have meaning, basically? And that's that. Thank you.

**18:40 Eliel Jones**

Thank you so much, Sahra, that was really a marathon presentation. She did that very quickly.

**18:46 Sahra Hersi**

I apologise to the people doing the sign language. It must have been incredibly difficult to keep up with that. Apologies.

**18:55 Eliel Jones**

Well, it's just as a reminder to everybody. These are prompts for our discussion so they will serve further conversation. So we will hear more from Sahra and more about these projects in a little bit, but before that, I'm going to just hand over to Julian for their presentation before we enter the discussion. So Julian is a sculptor based in New York City whose work engages the intersections of queer history, community and public space. In 2021, Prairie created and installed a statue of Marsha P Johnson in Christopher Park, the first public sculpture of a transgender person in New York City. This year, they collaborated with House of LaBeija to unveil a sculpture of Crystal LaBeija, founder of ballroom culture at the Museum of the City of New York. Julian will talk about these two projects, as well as the ways that their practice is informed by a background in community organising, research and

aesthetic theory and a long-standing interest in LGBTQ histories. They will also draw on their work with queer and trans youth through the QT Art Camp so. So if you're good to go, Julian, I'll give over to you.

## 20:04 Julian Prairie

Okay, cool. Thank you so much. Good morning. My name is Julian. I'm in Chicago right now, so it's 8.20. I am white. I'm transgender, trans masculine. I have blonde hair, and I'm wearing a beige shirt. Let me start my timer. I'm going to share my screen now, so give me a sec. Okay, sweet. Can everyone see it good? We're good. Okay, cool. Again. My name is Julian. Here are a few pieces of my work. I'm based in Brooklyn, New York. I'm a sculptor. These are just a few pieces of my general practice sketches, pieces of friends that I kind of just wanted to give an overview visually of. So the next slide is, this is the slide that was mentioned of Marsha P Johnson. So in 2021 through a series of conversations, I installed a statue of Marsha P Johnson, who is notably a trans historical figure within LGBTQ history and LGBTQ movement-making. At this point, so what was happening contextually within New York City was that New York City had stated that they were going to install a piece of Marsha P Johnson in 2018 and 2019 as part of a monument initiative movements. Through city funding, through changes within parties, things like that, the funding ended up falling through, and there was no statue made. So this, this idea of like having a Marsha statue like doesn't really even feel like my own, like this, this very much, even predates me being more born. Marsha passed away in 1992, and by 1993 her roommate Randy Wicker was petitioning to try and get a statue of her maid. And so, so we're talking about almost like a 30-year history of people trying to get this statue made, and it never happening. And then one night, me and my friend, we were just sitting there, and we're like, I have a technical background in public, like in making very traditional monuments, like training. And we were just like, what if we just did this? And it kind of just started from there. And I had no idea what I was doing. I had no idea what I was getting into. I installed the piece initially illegally. I assumed that it would just, like, be taken by the police overnight, and that it would just be like, okay, I did this. Like, I have the mould I can, like, just kind of move on. And that wasn't what ended up happening, like, through a lot of like, very like, interesting, like, physical jurisdictions, like, I realised that this was installed at Christopher Park. For those maybe who are not familiar with this, like geography, Christopher Park is located across the street from the Stonewall Inn, which was noted as one of the birthplaces of the modern LGBTQ political movement. So literally to behind that white statute statue is the Stonewall Inn. So this jurisdiction is actually considered federal property, because in 2016 Obama noted it as a - I'm going to keep moving through - as a federal landmark. So here is a video. This is a

video of my sculpture mentor, Heather Personett, who I adore. She and I made a mould of the sculpture together in my studio. So the mould actually, like exists. It can have more copies. Yeah, so this was, this was a very fun process. And I think, like, what Sahra is saying is that, like the amount of people, what's very similar in our practices is like the amount of people that is involved with public work, like through even just the engineering of making a sculpture just is so big and more than I really even like ever I feel like even could imagine when I was doing this project, and I'm still learning a lot about it, because I do consider myself more coming from a grassroots background with public work, and still very much figuring it out. So I wanted to just show a few pictures really quickly of like my academic life and my academic work. So I trained for four years as a figurative sculptor. I went to a school called Grand Central Atelier, and this is of a life size sculpture. I just show this because, like, these are just a lot of works that have just kind of meant a lot to me, but also, like are very much have influenced the way that I'm thinking about representing people too. And I am rooted in a very like technical background, and with that, at least in the United States, like a lot of people who are training within like these spheres, like these are not like very like far-left type environments. I was the first openly trans person at this school. I am one of the only LGBTQ, like more trained sculptors that I know right now. I don't know any other trans one who does this type of work. So, like, I think more just like my a lot of my process was also like, being like, I wanted to learn this thing, because I wanted to bring this, this skill set to communities that I cared about, like queer communities, and I kind of just like, went through this very kind of interesting process with it. Another thing about queer communities that's been mentioned is that in 2021 I started a project called *QT Art Camp*, which brings Trans and Queer Youth Art workshops. Right now, it's not as active we do like small things here and there, but I initially started it because I wanted to. I initially said I want to go and volunteer with a queer and youth art camp in New York City. And then I Googled it, and it just like, didn't exist. So, like a lot of my projects are just saying, I want to do this. Thank you. I see the 45 seconds too. Yeah, thanks. Are like, I want to do this, and then it doesn't exist, and then I just get kind of irritated, and then I just, like, try to figure it out from there. So yeah, so there's a lot of just, like, just figuring things out within my process. This is the current project I'm working on. I'll just briefly cover it. It's - I partnered with the House of LaBeija, which was the first house of ballroom based in New York City. Crystal LaBeija was an amazing, amazing one. There's really great documentaries on her. *The Queen* on YouTube is one that I highly recommend you can see her at a very pivotal moment with an LGBTQ history in the 60s. My timer's going off. So, yeah, so this was a project I worked on. A big part of my process, too, is like, Sahra, like, engaging with communities, and like in my academic work, it's like, I go in, I have an idea for a sculpture. I just like, do it. It's like, a few weeks, few months,



something like that. And, and I think, you know, this process has really kind of uncovered that, like, it takes time to work with communities and integrate into communities. And like the, you know, 50% of doing the Crystal LaBeija monument was sculpting, actually, maybe like 20% and maybe 50% to like 60% is like, community engagement and talking to people and going to events and, like, just really, for me, trying to feel what's going on, and the energy and, like, really wanting to honour stories in a really particular way. So I'm almost done. So the next steps for this is, right now, it's at the Museum of the City of New York. If you find yourself in New York, it will be there for until February 2026, and then we've had discussions about bringing it to Marcus Garvey Park. So also, House of LaBeija has never installed a public work like, I've never, like, installed the public work really, within this capacity. So we're dealing with art permits. So, so again, working with grassroots communities to figure out, like, how do we find the solutions for the things we want? And that's it. Thank you so much everyone. I really, I really appreciate

## 28:54 Eliel Jones

Thank you, Julian, and Sahra again, for your presentations and for yeah, being so generous and such a quick little span of time. Luckily, that's not the end of our discussion, of our conversation. It only now begins. There's a lot to somehow cover, a lot of ground that you both have already sort of pointed attention to with the various projects that you've talked about, but there's about two, three questions that I kind of wanted to pose to you before we open to the audience. And just a reminder to everybody, please, you can write on the chat, thoughts, questions, and if you'd like to ask a question, you can do so also out loud, just raise your hand and we can, we can segue into you. But Sahra and Julian, I'm really interested in the role, both directly and indirectly, this kind of involvement of community within both of your working methodologies. You've both attended to it in various levels of participation, from processes of negotiation and discussion to direct input and even creation or co-creation, of things that end up being the work. And I think many of us here today probably know is that working in this way, working in public space or with public, necessitates this almost collaborative community approach. But it's not always the rule. I think it's important also to point that out right, like working in public space, ideally, does include and take into account members of the public and specific communities, but much public art, indeed, actually just appears in public space. It doesn't necessarily ever take anybody or anything into account. But as I think it's clear from your presentations, it's a really important part of your working methodologies, and it's something that requires a certain level of experience, or at the very least, commitment to principles of organising, whether that be

architectural organising, urbanistic organising, political organising, right? It somehow expands also the role of the artist, and also beyond artistic production. Julian, you had mentioned, 15-20% of the process of making the Crystal LaBeija sculpture was actually making the work, and most of the other work is being in community, thinking, consulting, taking temperature. So I guess I wanted to ask you both about collaboration, and what aspects of collaboration interest you both the most. And what does it bring to each of your practices and maybe the projects that you've talked about today. I'm not sure if either of you want to go first.

31:52 Sahra Hersi

Should I go first?

31:55 Julian Prairie

Yeah, yeah, go for it.

31:57 Sahra Hersi

I think it's; it's such a - I think it is a great question. I think some of it is quite personal, in terms of interest in how you know somebody one wants to take their practice forward. And for me, it's I've always been interested in the collective and people in general, and also, because I work within the public realm, it makes a lot of sense that I would involve the communities that may come across the work. And I think also, like you said, it's actually not always done, or even maybe not always necessary, you know, I think that also needs to be said, you know, because I don't think it's always necessary. But for me, the way that I work, I think that's kind of my interest is kind of to figure out how, because I'm very much not - because I think for me, that's how I carry out my research. Because I don't see myself as the pen, if that makes sense. Like I see myself as a person holding the pen, rather than, like, the pen for the community, in the community, just like, you know, like making the pen move around a page, you know? It's, it's more about, like, how can I make sure that what I'm doing is informed? And how can I make sure that, and it's not, I think it's not just good enough to read about something in a - and I'm not saying, you know that in an academic sense, like far removed, and study it from a distance. I think when you're working with people and living things, I think it's very important to root yourself within the context of, you know, people and the living things that you're working with, and try to understand the context. And for me, I think I do that best when I'm actually in in contact with people and it effects - it also expands my thinking, and I think it makes the work better, even though, having said that, there's

always challenges, because you're not just working with one source. You don't get to pick and choose. And I've said, If I'm honest, also you're working with your own ego, you know, like, and also you have your own personal artistic style, you know, and people may not like that, that you're even the people that you're working with, or the communities you're working with. So you have to be able to also put yourself in a position where people like don't like it, or they don't fully understand what you're coming up with, and the opposite, you know, but I find that generally, when you're working with people, it builds, it becomes a team effort. And I really enjoy the kind of friendships or relationships. They're not always long-term, even in the moment. I enjoy, I really enjoy, like working with people in that sense.

### 34:42 Eliel Jones

I really love what you said about not being the pen, but being the hand that holds the pen, and I think that's really important to remember when, when we're thinking about collaborative practices, or practices that have a co-creative or co-participatory process, that it doesn't necessarily automatically mean that. People are telling the artist what to do, right, like, we want you to do this, or this is exactly what it looks should look like. Or a lot of the time it feels like the artist is really there to kind of, like, spark imagination and spark critical discussion. I think you mentioned this in your presentation, also, Sahra, where also, people kind of go beyond also what they imagine to be possible in the public realm. Like, I think when you when you talk to people about doing things in public space or on a street, like, the first thing that comes up is like a mural, because that's sort of like the form that many people are used to when thinking about public artwork commissions or public artwork spaces. And I find that when artists come in and they're kind of broadening. You know, what does it mean to collaborate? What does it mean to be influenced by your thinking, your life experience, that that informs an artwork that actually can be a lot more complex. But Julian, sorry. Over to you.

### 35:52 Julian Prairie

Yeah, no. Thank you. I also agree. I love that pen analogy, and I totally might use it in other places, and definitely quote you when I do it. But yeah, like, I think I also I really relate to this idea of just like my personality and who I am as a person is I function better strongly, like, in relation to people. The idea of being in a studio all day and like, not communicating with people, like, is not my natural habitat. And I also feel like I was thinking about like, so my statue, my first statue of Marsha, there was like, an invite that people could place flowers in her crown. And so every day, people would go up, even multiple times a day, they go to the deli, they go buy

flowers, and they could do something like, like, change the flowers. And I feel like, when you, when you bring artwork into the public realm, it, it has the capacity to take on a larger, like, participatory aspect, because, because it's just like being outside, or, I think about like being at the peers in the 80s in New York City, and everyone's just doing their thing and like it becomes naturally collaborative. And I haven't felt that in galleries and museums it was as accessible. And I think even maybe like in a selfish way, like, like it like, as an artist, I want my work to like, continue to breathe life after it's made. I don't want my art to just like, get there and not be liked by its neighbours. Like, I enjoy this kind of like, ability for it to take on its own, you know. And with that, it does become hard sometimes to be like this thing, I'm like, this is like, I'm giving this, you know, and like, and now it just can have its own life, like other things could happen to it, but there still is like this, this almost safety, like you safety aspect, you do want to keep it safe, you know, from actual, real dangers that can happen to public artwork, especially of marginalised people. Yeah, so I guess, and then, and then also, with my current project, like there's a stone stacking element that that, that we've introduced at the museum. We're only able to do it at a minimal level, kind of, but I was, I was really influenced by Félix González-Torres when I was young and a little art student, and I loved his work. And I remember going, grabbing the candy and like, it's just like, it was, it's like, probably my favourite art piece, and so, so for me, this, like, participatory. I want people to be able to go up and, like, do something, because I have always felt very under stimulated by going up to traditional monuments and just like looking at it, like, I just it didn't, it didn't help me, kind of like, like, think about more things at all.

### 38:36 Eliel Jones

No, super interesting. And actually, it reminds me a little bit of some of the things that the three of us spoke about when we met some weeks ago to prepare for today's conversation. And Sahra, you brought up this question of maintenance, which I found super, super interesting. You talked about the role of maintenance in relationship to the public realm, but also very particular, the role of beauty, of beautification in public spaces in relation to the feeling or the experience of safety. And of course, it's connected to a question of care, and who cares for these spaces, or these works once they enter a space where things are co-owned or shared. And what happens when they're not cared for, or when they are actively also defaced or destroyed, which actually can have a complete opposite effect with it can increase feelings of hostility and of fear. And sadly, there are recent examples where this kind of violence is enacted towards public artworks that depict women or LGBTQ+ people racialised communities. So what potential for transformation and safety do you think are possible by introducing these kinds of works into the public realm?

Like, do you think there's a way of somehow in the way that you're talking about Julian, extending the possibility for community by instilling some kind of collective ownership and responsibility towards these works, but also perhaps participatory components that you were describing the flowers or the stones? And do those - that feeling of ownership and that sense of almost like belonging of that thing, extend also to the public realm, where these things are and where these space, you know, what the public spaces they inhabit, in a way?

## 40:31 Julian Prairie

If you want to go, do you want to say anything, Sahra? No, okay, yeah, I guess, yeah. I do feel like, in some way, like, like, yeah, like, when more people care about the piece or are involved, it somehow does kind of initiate this public care in this more abstract sense, and then kind of like trying to, like, the larger conversation of like, what is public space? Is that, then you have to have like spaces that are like, not closed. Like, a lot of parks in the US will be closed at like, 6pm or something. So you actually kind of, like, can lose access to the piece really quick. It could still easily get defaced, but it's like, you can't just go and, like, stroll by the piece. But yeah, during the Marsha project, it was at Christopher Park, it was over COVID, and there's a lot of people who are either low income, LGBTQ within, like, the houseless community, and they all sat at the park over COVID and just like, hung out. And I didn't even know this, but they ended up, like, hanging out around the statue almost the entire time. And whenever anyone would try to mess with it, they would all like, yell at them. And so like, and I would go there every day to, like, maintenance it and stuff, and like, just hang out, because it was COVID summer and, and, yeah, I called them, like, like, Marsha's angels kind of, because they kind of just like, sat on the outside and they would, like, go and hang out and, like, drink next to it, and like, it was, you know, they very much took care of it and, and like, that was okay with me. And so I do think there's something about getting people to, like, care for it too, and also like you, you brought up too in our last talk about that really cool sculpture in Spain, and how defacing it actually kind of drove this, like, need to care about the object as well.

## 42:15 Eliel Jones

Yeah, it was this example of a monument that was done of a transgender woman formerly known as La Veneno, who became really, I guess, known within mainstream popular culture in Spain at one point because she basically started appearing in these kind of TV, like nighttime TV programs. But, but she became, really, importantly, this, yeah, there's this figure for the trans movement also in

Spain, and she died quite young, and the monument was raised for her in a park in Madrid where she used to do sex work. And the monument was there for a while untouched, and then it started to be defaced by different far right groups and transphobic groups. And of course, the immediate community's response was to go and clean and to repair. That was sort of like the immediate feeling of, we have to go, we have to clean, we have to repair. And then what happened is that every time that it was cleaned and repaired, the damage would happen again. And that each time the damage was bigger, you know, to the point that one of the last moments they actually burned part of the structure. And there was a consultation between different community members, people that have been involved in the sculpture process, to think about what to do. And one decision that was made at one point was to kind of leave the sculpture with its damage, to say this monument, in some way represents, actually, some of the heroic abuse and difficulty that La Veneno suffered through her life and is still suffering even in her death, and of course, represents a much wider space of hostility and violence towards trans communities. What would it mean to actually just show it and to say, this is the state of, you know, of people's feelings towards these communities, and what do we do about it? And it became a sort of point of discussion which got a lot of attention. So this question of care and maintenance, which was one of restoration and preservation, then turned into kind of like, okay, we leave the monument defaced, but then we do something with this defacement.

#### 44:25 Sahra Hersi

I think what you both touch upon is like really important sort of the psychological and societal element as well, like thinking about when you make something in the public realm, like the responsibility of being able to upkeep it. And also, there is also the other thing that, I think another massive force is the maintenance cost that you know, like, once you're commissioned to do an artwork, there's also, no matter what you propose, the question is always like, how much is going to cost to maintain this? Or like, what about the maintenance - you can't use that material? What are you going to do? You know, there's like, oh, yeah, you're dealing with all of these. I think that that's probably going back to the other thing with the community. The thing that doesn't always come across is how much behind the scenes you're constantly negotiating like, things that come about. Like, from the commissioner's perspective, obviously, they want this artwork. They want it to represent something and like signal in terms of their values. And, you know, like, which, to me, you know, it's good values. We all want women and girls and everyone, regardless of their gender background, to be safe, but at the same time, like, once you put something in the public realm, it's like, who has that responsibility? In an ideal world, you would want

the community to be able to like, take ownership and be able to clean it themselves and become this wonderful community that's bound together. It's constantly cleaning and taking care of but the reality is, especially in a context like London, is there's so little time, so little resources and like we can we expect the community to take it on, especially if you're putting it in areas that may have people who are marginalised or from low socio-economic backgrounds, who don't have the time to maintain this, who are like, barely getting by themselves. And then you don't want to put up an artwork and be like, you have to maintain this artwork, you know, the community. And then what about our needs? And then it so I'm always, like, thinking about these forces and like, how do you and there isn't an answer other than, I wish there was more money for this, but at the same time, like, is, like, if a bit of chewing gum gets on a work that I'm doing, or a little bit of graffiti or a sticker, I really, I think it's not that, it's not, it's not a huge deal, especially like in terms of the work that I'm doing. But then again, if it has, like, a symbolic, you know, very personal, you know, in terms of anti-racism, anti-transphobia, like, if that artwork, or like, you know, in terms of sexism and things like, is defaced, then it says something completely different, right, than just your average, like, nice thing on the on the street, right? If it has an actual symbolic value, it becomes so much worse when that's defaced, you know? So I'm not giving an answer, but I'm just kind of talking about, like, what we're dealing with and like how we're constantly especially as artists, once you create a thing and it's in the public realm, it's, you know, it's, it becomes like, you know, how do you deal with that? And how do you want the community or people or client to maintain it moving forward? And what's your responsibility? I don't know if I have those answers, but some thoughts I had around it.

#### 47:43 Eliel Jones

No, it's super interesting. And I think I mean in some ways, with the example La Veneno or others that we can think of in relation to defacement, something that I think about is the ways in which marginalised communities have always had to somehow like claim a space that has been difficult, and even sometimes claim words or addresses that are kind of maybe offensive, but we kind of repurpose them as a way of surviving or existing. And it makes me think about that in relationship to, yeah, the example of La Veneno of well, okay, we're going to, we're going to deal with your with your defacement, but it's actually going to be empowering to us, and we're going to use it as a way of, kind of, actually change, changing it as much as we can this context and also where it is.

## 48:28 Sahra Hersi

Just one last point I wanted to, like, I wanted to add, is, if it's in a like, privately owned, yeah, it's like space in terms of maintenance, you always can tell in the UK, you know, private and public owned. It's not always clear, but you can tell from maintenance, usually, what is privately owned and what's publicly owned. It's, it's, it becomes quite clear in terms of like maintenance, and also socio-economic background, what, what kind, how much money is around to keep things maintained and in tip top condition, which you know it's always there's always signs, if you look closely, like, who gets to have their stuff constantly cleaned and who doesn't?

## 49:14 Eliel Jones

I think it's really fair to say that we're also very, I think all of us here probably, but us three, also very aware of the limitations of what it's possible. I mean, you mentioned it also, Sahra in your presentation, what is possible to achieve in the public realm with art. And yet, we're also very firm believers of the value when put in of doing this work, when put into good practice. And so much, I mean, you were mentioning, also so much of the opportunities that are offered with this kind of work pursue a certain kind of outcome, which is often measured before it even happens, and at the very worst, sometimes they can also presume that simply introducing these works into the public realm can resolve a certain problem, or which, of course, is it's not the case unless you match it with a certain kind. Of infrastructural and societal advocacy and change. So just to wrap up, before I give way to the audience questions, I wanted to ask you, how you both manage expectations of what's possible when working in the public realm, from both commissioning bodies, but also from the communities that you work with, and also, on the other hand, how do you also allow yourselves and the participants to dream of new public realms, of new streets, of new cities, ones in which liberation and safety can become more of a reality for everyone, right? Because that's what we're working towards.

## 50:38 Sahra Hersi

Should I take that, Julian? I think that's such a - I think that that, in itself, is a constant negotiation, like constantly thinking, like, how do you allow yourself to dream? How do you manage expectations? I think it's a constant conversation, and trying to keep people updated, and also, from the beginning saying, even if you say it, it's not something that, I think, because the process itself is so generous that so all, like the projects I worked on, I think the process have been generous in terms of, like, being able to pay people for their time, really thinking about the give and take.



In the two projects that I showed there was different kind of, like, stakes, um, one, you know, like paying people for their time, making sure that they're there, making them feel heard, you know, and then, you know that, and then all later on, we've done this generous process. We've had 10 workshops, but the budget is really small, even though it sounds like a lot, but it's actually in the public realm, like a drop in the ocean. And there's other forces that you have to work with, in terms of planning, land ownership, other things, you know, so it's in, I think it's trying to constantly have that conversation and dialog, and then in terms of dreaming, it's, I think it's, I think for me, what I'm learning is that with dreaming is like, how do you I think the early process, I wanted to be very much about dreaming, but then, like, when it's coming to showing what, like, which I haven't shown, actually the development of the design, because it's still evolving. But like, as the project is developed like making sure the participants are the first to see it, especially with the project I did with UP Projects and LLDC, they actually saw my first concept design before UP Projects and LLDC, the community collaborators, and like trying to honour their time and make sure they feel respected. So it's a constant negotiation. I don't have a clear answer, but it's something that I'm still trying to learn, and I'm still trying to grapple with. You know, I've been my practice has now almost been going for 10 years, and I can't even say I have the answer. It's, I think, for me, it's like through practice and through learning and through like, just having these different experiences is how I'm slowly learning. And I think there will never be a perfect scenario, but it's always like slowly learning through it. And I think the more actually budget there is, and the more resources, the more the kind of like, the pressures are bigger. So yeah, I don't know if I'll answer that, but yeah,

## 53:27 Julian Prairie

Yeah, I feel like that's a great question. I feel like also it's something I'm learning of like, how to balance out, like dreaming versus expectations. I almost feel like it was like better for me to have a very little knowledge about public practice administratively when I jumped in, because I think that could have even, like, scared me a little or hindered and I think I definitely at this point, like, when I'm when I'm talking to people about their ideas, or my ideas, or collaborations. Like, I definitely, like, truly believe that anything is possible, but I underline that of like this will take time. Like, like this might take five years. And like, we love this so much that like, that's okay, because we love this so much and like, knowing that the resources will follow too. And I haven't had a public work that was like, like funded first and then brought into an idea. And I almost think, like, in some ways, I think I do that intentionally, because I think that I feel like I can dream more when I don't have the stakeholders. And I think the other communities I'm with, like, it feels easier in some

ways, but also like, I don't know, I feel like it's a lot of, really, just a queer way, and, like, anarchist principles of, like, finding a way out of no way. It's like we care about this; we will find a way. And like, even if that is just like, we're going to do a pop up, or we are going to put posters around the city for one night, like we are going to just do like, one small like, 12 Inch by 12 inch thing, because like this matters. Like, I think that's like, even more important than like, finding like the right thing and making it huge, or like, like, just like, the idea and the community collaboration is almost really what's important. And in the object does kind of facilitate the discussion too. But yeah, I think just allowing it to have its own space, and not for me, I haven't had big stakeholders. I wonder how it would feel different and, yeah, so I guess also, just like affirming to everyone I'm collaborating with, like, we will find a way out of no way, kind of, I would say, is, like the core, kind of, like running belief when we get worried about funding, and we didn't get this grant, something like that.

#### 55:46 Eliel Jones

Yeah, I found it super interesting, Julian, when you described the process of, I didn't realise that Marsha sculpture had come in illegally to begin with, and that then somehow it made its place within Christopher Park. Because sometimes, yeah, you have to somehow strategise ways of making things happen when they're not possible, or to allow them to be possible, or to imagine them, I think, in a way.

#### 56:10 Julian Prairie

Totally and I guess, like, I will just say like, and then within a week or two, I was having meetings with the federal park people, and they issued me a permit for it, and they were super cool. And, like, very awesome people work for parks, I feel like are always really cool, but so like, I got an art permit for it. So it's like, it would have never gotten, like, the way in which they make permitting kind of a restriction, it would have never gotten approved. So, but then once it was there, they're like, okay, well, you can just have an art permit. Now, not that I'm saying doing that, but.

#### 56:42 Eliel Jones

No, it's very it's very, very interesting on this much that you've said that resonates with me, and I wish we had more time to go own over and over some of these things, but I want to also make sure that we have some time just to bring up some of the audience questions and comments. So please, if you have anything, questions, thoughts that you'd like to share do so in the chat. I'll start with a note

and question from Mel Herman, who is sort of wondering, how do you as artists who are trying to make a living, how do you consider whether or not to take up opportunities or projects when there is a risk for quote, unquote, art washing. So I guess this is referring to when there is that, when there are stakeholders involved that might have, I guess, ulterior motives for their reasons to inviting a certain artist or inviting a certain kind of project. We might be imagining, also commissioners that are more sort of corporate rather than public. I'm assuming, Mel, please clarify in the comment if you think otherwise, but I'm thinking yes, of corporate sponsorship for the creation of public sculpture or works in the public realm that may have some form of Yeah, instrumentalisation in their process, be it because they want to art wash or green wash, an aspect of their work. I guess, one that could maybe be known by everybody here. We can think about, for instance, BP, which is an oil company, that they were very much, a lot - I mean, for a very long time within the arts ecosystem, funding picture. And it's - that's an example of a potential art washing when somebody gets commissioned. And then there's inevitable link between a corporate desire to, I guess, yeah, rescind some of their responsibility by way of commissioning, or thinking about art as a way of making up for it, which obviously it doesn't. So how do you both feel or think about those questions in your in your work?

## 58:47 Julian Prairie

I guess for me, like, I, I like, I like, as I was saying, like, I've done more, like the idea, kind of phase without the corporate and then I have had, like, some corporate sponsorship come in later. And I, I found that that kind of helped to, like, develop the little plant, kind of, well, it's still really sensitive, and then once it's more fully grown, then presenting it kind of so, like, external options. And I'm also, I'm not making, like, financially supporting myself 100% off artwork. It's a part of it. But my, my, like, I have a consistent income being a community organiser for a nonprofit too, which also informs this work. So I also think in some way, not relying on it has almost helped me a lot.

## 59:36 Sahra Hersi

I think it's a really good and important question to think about in terms of, like, how is the work? Is a question I ask myself a lot, is my work? Am I helping to art wash? Basically, I try to work, I think I can confidently say, although someone might do some research and be like, you did this and this, which I don't think I have. But like, I tend to work with, like government bodies or like, as I said, third sector charities and but that doesn't mean that all the money is completely clean, as we know. It

doesn't mean that, you know, that the council or whatever, don't have their own agendas, you know, and their own political things that they want to push. So it's like, as soon as you're working within the world, you are constantly negotiating, like you're constantly negotiating other forces that you may not agree with. So it's like it doesn't matter who you work with. Honestly, I think that there's always a - you always have to, like, balance out what, like, where would this art sit? Where is the money coming from? What does this say? Who's it for? And that doesn't mean like, I would ever work with somebody like, obviously, there are some clear I have, like, some clear lines, which is why I try to never work with developers. And I try to never work with, like, private companies. But it doesn't mean that even the money that I'm working with public, you know, bodies doesn't come from private companies and developers, because also, like in the UK, developers and councils are very much intertwined. So it's sometimes hard to even be able to separate those two things and but I'm more of thinking about, actually, in terms of what I'm talking about, small changes. What is my role within that? Like, if I'm working with the community, how can I make sure people pay for their time? You know, like, how can I make sure there's a give and take if it's not, like, if you can't pay them money, you know, how do you manage your expectations from the community so you're not a force of extracting like, how can you give back some of the material budget? How do you make sure that the like, if you doing workshop, that it's not just like, crappy biscuits and it's really boring and people have a nice time with this money? Or, like, can you get materials given back, like, to the communities you're working with so constantly trying to negotiate and work through those kinds of means. And I am, I think I'm in a privileged position, after like, almost 10 years of practicing and of being able to, maybe, in the past three years, like, sustain myself through my practice, which doesn't mean I'm rich or in position to, like, buy a house, for example, but I can pay my rent, you know, and I do teach as a supplementary thing, but my most my income comes from my practice. And I'm very lucky to be able to say that as somebody who comes from like, a working class background and has like and it doesn't mean and the privilege that I have is that I have family who live in the UK, which meant that I could spend a lot of time living at home. So there's so many like, I mean, in the UK, in in London specifically, so where a lot of the opportunities are in the UK. So there's so many. It's something that I'm constantly trying to keep my integrity with and something that I love to talk or try to talk about very honestly, and the way that I like talk about my practice, and the way that I like position myself politically and position my opinions. I'm always very clear what I believe in, and if anybody, and most of the time, I'm lucky that people approach me and I try to, and I prefer that, because it means that they know what they're approaching, rather than the other way around. So and that happened because I had to literally stay at home for a very long time and make barely any money, and my family be like, what the

hell are you doing until I started to make some money in the past three years. So it's been a long game, you know? So, yeah.

**1:03:47 Eliel Jones**

I think it's also really important that the responsibility doesn't only lie on artists like this, is the responsibility also of the organisation that are kind of in between maybe funder and commissioner, to really also have these ethical charters, and, you know, ethical fundraising, ethical development, that that also provides some form of safety net for the artists that they're working with, right? And in the ideal world, this is something that's being held collectively between artists, you know, organisation and other partners. But I'm mindful of time, and Simone has raised her hand to ask a question. Simone, if you'd like to unmute yourself to ask.

**1:04:28 Audience Member**

Yeah, I had a few questions, but I'm going to go with one, because we're stuck on time, and I wanted to ask a bit of a friendly, challenging question. I have worked in the arts for a while, but I'm now working for a communities organisation that came out of an activist movement, and we do a lot of stuff where we make space for difficult conversations and those debates that we have aren't abstract. They're very real. They're very grounded, partly because we're very entrenched in our area, which is probably the most diverse area of Glasgow, probably Scotland, the most diverse square mile. I think 81 different languages are spoken in the square mile, and often for things in the public realm, for sculpture, for festivals. The communities themselves provide a lot of challenge. A good example being is we working in partnership with welcome to the fringe Palestine, but we're also holding space for a radical Jewish tradition that is challenging simplistic narratives around identity and solidarity all in the one same space of the festival, and that comes from the community. And I'm just - what's been fascinating for me, from moving from a career where I started working with artists, and I'm now working with artists, but through communities, is that actually how the public realm is has always been contested and is always a volatile space, and actually sometimes the communities are much, much more willing to go to especially if it's localised to the risky place of thought, in a way that the artist doesn't often do that. There's a degree of education, sanitisation, professionalism, academic language that kind of comes in, and there's a lot of artists that want to work with communities, and this stuff is already sort of happening in that space. And I just wanted to for you guys to speak to that, because it's just, I think it's an interesting time for the arts organisation,

and I think the arts are becoming more civic, and I'd like to hear more about your thoughts on that.

1:06:51      Eliel Jones

Julian or Sahra, do you want to take that on?

1:06:55      Julian Prairie

I think I can - I can try to, I'm, like, still processing it a bit and like, like, kind of gathering my thoughts. But I can, I, I can try to take it on, or, like, think about it a little as I'm talking, but I think it's just more, for me, it's been a lot about, like, not as you're kind of doing, not staying away from the difficult conversations and finding that it's, it's like in the difficult conversations, a lot of the solutions are, are usually found. I do agree that, like public art, like for me, it really initiates more of this, like civic responsibility kind of and like, I really approach it as like I am, like this citizen, kind of just doing things for people, rather than like this, this artist, artist person and like so, yes, I think just like the civic responsibility, and I think, I don't know, I think a lot of times that like it, just for me too, a lot of it is about slowing down. And so a lot of times the expectations, or our desire to have this many projects or this many workshops, or this many talks, like, like, usually, sometimes it has to slow down and it has to be like, we're just going to like talk, we're just going to do a series with this Jewish group and this pro Palestine group, and it's just going to, like, take more time and like that just kind of gets all the effort. And like, I've found when I'm in a lot of more grassroots spaces is that that's kind of just naturally what happens. But I don't know. I feel like a lot of times people really just want to be heard and, have space so, so I guess that's like, my initial thoughts on it. But I'm curious on other people.

1:08:32      Julian Prairie

Sahra, do you want to say something before I respond also?

1:08:36      Sahra Hersi

I think, like Julian said, I'm also processing it, I think, for me, and the fact that I'm processing is telling me that that, like, I kind of would throw the question back, was it Simone? Like thinking because I'm not in Glasgow. I don't know that context, but I would think that, since you're rooted in that context, how would you approach this in terms of, how can you make sure people's voices are heard? How do you balance,

you know, how, how can you balance this and like and you know, 80 languages are spoken. But then it's like, how, you know, where do you find the shared humanity like I, I because it's such a, you know, you would need time to kind of understand that it takes, you know, what, what existing communities can you kind of embed yourself in to sort of try and understand the complexities of what you're dealing with. Because I think the other thing about like being artists who work in this context is that we can't like I like, for me, it's like I work case by case, project by project. So I don't want to say too much, because I don't think I'll be the appropriate person to be able to do that. But you would have so much more knowledge because you're in it. Like, how would you like, how would you make a framework to deal with that, basically? And I think, like, there aren't any simple answers, but where do you find the like, the common ground to kind of work in and also being an arts organisation in terms of the power, or if you are a charity, the power you wield is very different to the power of the artist that you commission who works in the context. And sometimes it's like artists are commissioned to like, solve an issue, or have the answers, but actually, we don't always have the answers. Like it's a group - the artists need the support in order to like, respond to a context, rather than try and solve a context.

1:10:49      Eliel Jones

I think this, it's a really good set of remarks and reflections. Thank you, Simone, actually, to wrap up the session, also, because I can then somehow try to bring together some of the things that we've been speaking about because one thing that really stuck, sticks with me, with from what we've spoken, is that there is an expectation or need or desire to think about the public of realm as being for everybody. And of course, it is, right? We all should have the right to feel safe in public space. The reality is, we all don't and when, when we're working in the public realm or in public space, and particularly in communities where there are diverse, you know, divergent perspectives, so experiences or feelings towards the public realm, I think what's really important is to not assume that you have to speak to all of them at once or in the same way, right? Like it might be impossible to do that. And one thing that has really been in my mind as of late, but also previously, with projects that I've done in the past, is that it's okay to do something that is for one of those communities or one of those groups or one of those languages, and to really attend to them and to think with them and to address them, and to somehow do that really well and not fear or worry that it somehow might be of detriment to other communities, right? This, this shared sense of humanity that Sahra was talking about, I think it's really important that that yes, that we acknowledge that everything is for everybody, and that, of course, whatever we do will welcome

anybody but it might speak to some people more than others, right? There's an example that we did this project in Brent as part of the Brent Biennial, looking at the history of an LGBTQIA+ youth centre that had begun in Brent and then had been closed down. And we did this whole oral history project about the history of this space, which was connected to initially being an HIV prevention initiative, and anyhow, the artist came up with the slogan called "Growing Up Bent" as a play on Brent. He took out the art and we and he put it in the library, really, really big. And there were some people who took offense, you know, who thought that this slogan might be somehow seen as offensive, or that people in Brent might think that it speaks to everybody, that suddenly everybody in Brent is bent, and somehow that was kind of like, almost like a negative association, and we really sort of had to embrace it and speak with people about it, and sort of be like, okay, but what - what about this association would be offensive to you? Is, is being associated with LGBT+ communities offensive, if so, why? And it opened up a lot of discussion, and it was really important that we did it for the community that we were working with and all of these young people who loved this association with being bent and from Brent. And then to talk with the community that took offense or who felt that that didn't represent them, to also be like, it's okay, I understand and I hear what you're saying, but also we also can take up the space, and we can also take up this discussion. And I think that is in the world that we live in a really necessary process, this process of maybe meeting each other in difference, meeting each other at times and disagreements, but being able to meet. Being able to gather at that table and to look at each other and to be like, okay, where are we at and how do we move on? And I think that's something really special, beautiful and quite, yeah, full of potential in regards to pub the public realm, and what public sculpture can do in terms of creating these meeting points, creating these modes of encounter that are becoming more and more difficult, that are disappearing due to privatisation, or that are just being eroded very intentionally; our right to meet each other, to know each other, to commune with each other. So I know that we're bang on time. So I'm sorry, I think we have to leave it there. I'll give it to Moira to wrap us up.

**1:14:46**      **Moira Lascelles**

Wow, thank you so much. Ellie, Sahra and Julian. That was amazing. What a rich and I have to say, really honest discussion. So thank you so much for that. I absolutely love the analogy of the artist holding the pen for the community, Sahra. And I really was inspired to hear about Marsha's angels, Julian, and how people protecting a sculpture is kind of symbolic of how others might wish to protect other marginalised communities as well. And that was really, really beautiful to hear. Thank you also to everyone who joined today, and also to our amazing BSL



interpreters, Lydia Jones and Kirstie Archer. This is the first in a series of three events. So our next *Assembly* event will take place on the 12 November. It's titled *A Right to Decide: Empowering Young People to Shape Cultural Space*, and it will focus on the rights of young people. So please do sign up to that. I think Jack's putting a link in the chat now, and we will also release details of our next *Assembly* event. And we have a special newsletter that you can sign up to. So again, that link should be in the chat, so we encourage you to sign up. And then we've also got something called the *Constellations ° Exchange*, which is a group on LinkedIn that enables the *Constellations* community to connect and share thoughts and resources. It's great to see many people have already joined, but if you would like to share your reflections on today's event, then please do join via the link in the chat and share any links or resources that you think came up for you for the event today, it's really a space to encourage that onward exchange of ideas. And the final plug, we're also convening a symposium on the Thursday 11 of September in Liverpool as part of the Biennial. So you'll get to experience the last weekend of the Liverpool Biennial as well, and that's exploring regenerative practice in the context of public art commissioning. And finally, your feedback is really, really important to us to help us make sure our *Assemblies* are responding to your needs and your requests. So we just, we just added a short survey link into the chat. And please, please, please do send fill it out. It only takes a couple of minutes, but we do look at each and every one of them. And finally, just thank you so much for joining us today and to our wonderful speakers. And also, of course, to the fantastic UP team, specifically Jack, who is an excellent producer of *Assembly* events and yeah. So thank you from us once again and have a lovely afternoon. Thank you.